

2. Hasan al-Basrī & Rabia Basri.

Hasan Basri.

Introduction:

Hasan Basri (642-728 AD) was not a scientist in the modern sense, but a scholar, preacher, ascetic (zāhid) and theologian (mutakallim), whose thoughts shaped Islamic spirituality, ethics, and theology. He is remembered as a pioneer of Islamic Sufism, a strong voice of moral conscience, and a link between the Prophet's Companions and later generations. He was a Qazi (judge). He was a taabain (2nd generation of Islam). He followed Sunni sect (maslak), it is not clear which Sunni he was' means hanafi, maliki, shafi or hanbali because in his time these 4 sect (maslak) (differences) were not there. He taught in this early age to the people during Khilaafat-e-Umayya period.

Please note that Sufis of early time specially during Islamic golden age were Islamic Sufis & they practiced Islam full like Salah, Haj, fasting in ramzaan, tahajjud salah etc & though people the true meaning of Quran & hadith & the right way etc; today's Sufis are different they don't practice Faraiz (Islamic obligatory practice) fully, they smoke drugs etc & drag people in false pathway.

Early Life and Background:

Full name: Abū Sa'īd al-Ḥasan ibn Abī'l-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Born in 642 AD (21 hijri) in Medina, during the caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.

His parents were freed slaves: his father was from Persia, his mother Khairah served Umme Salma (wife of the Prophet ﷺ). He was raised in an environment close to the Prophet's household, giving him deep exposure to early Islam. His family moved to Baṣra (Iraq) after battle of Siffin, which became his home and intellectual base.

Teachers and Influences:

Studied under many Companions of the Prophet ﷺ including Uthmān ibn 'Affān, Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Abdullāh ibn Abbās, Abū Hurayrah, Anas ibn Mālik (r.a) (who transmitted Hadith to him). This gave him a direct chain of knowledge after the Prophet ﷺ. He was very much influenced by early Quranic scholars, jurists, and ascetics (zahids).

Career and Preaching:

He was settled in Baṣra, a bustling garrison city and intellectual center. He was known for his eloquent sermons (khubah), ascetic lifestyle (simply lifestyle) and fearless criticism of rulers. Soon he became a popular preacher, attracting students, ascetics, and seekers of wisdom.

Sometimes consulted by rulers (like Caliph Umar ibn Abdul Azīz) but often spoke against political corruption. He refused wealth and high positions, choosing a life of simplicity.

Books and Attributed Works:

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī himself did not write extensively; much of his thought was transmitted orally by students. However, later collections preserve his sayings and letters:

1. Kitāb al-Zuhd (Book of Asceticism): sayings on piety and renunciation.
2. Risāla fī'l-Qadar (Treatise on Predestination): one of the earliest texts in Islamic theology.
3. His sermons (Khutbah) and letters were collected & preserved & were found in later works like Ibn al-Jawzī's Ṣifāt al-Ṣafwā.

Contributions to Islamic: a) Spirituality (Early Sufism):

He is considered as founding fathers of Sufism. He taught detachment from worldly pleasures (zuhd) and emphasized for fear of Allah (khawf), hope in Allah's mercy & remembrance of death and accountability (hisaab kitab).

b) Theology (study of Allah & His path):

He was one of the earliest to discuss free will vs. predestination (Qadar). He opposed the deterministic view that excused injustice as Allah's will. His views inspired the Qadariyya movement, which emphasized human responsibility. In Islam, Qadar (قدر) refers to Divine Destiny, the belief that Allah has decreed and known everything that has happened, is happening, and will happen in the universe. Qadariyya were early Muslims who strongly defended free will against predestination, clashing with rulers. Explain in the table at the end of this lesson.

c) Ethics and Society:

He was a critic (against) of tyranny (zulm) and hypocrisy (nifaq / munafiq). Promoted justice, honesty, humility, and compassion (raham/ kindness, mercy). He urged the rulers to uphold the rights of the weak and poor.

d) Influence on Scholars:

Many later teacher, ascetics and Sufis were influenced by him, scholars like Sufyān al-Thawrī, Rābia Basri, and al-Ghazālī etc. His legacy became foundational in both Sunni theology and Sufi spirituality.

6. Teachings and Thought:

Allah is just, merciful, but humans must act responsibly. Purify from greed, arrogance, and hypocrisy should practice; gaining true knowledge is not only intellectual but transformative. Remembrance of Death (O son of Adam, you are nothing but a number of days. Whenever a day passes, a part of you is gone). Speak truth to power, advised to the rulers but refused to flatter them.

7. Talent and Personality:

He was known for his deep, eloquent voice and powerful sermons, his words moved listeners to tears and repentance. He is remembered for his wisdom, humility, and sincerity. His greatest talent was to combine Quranic insight with practical guidance for ordinary Muslims.

8. Death and Legacy:

He died in 728 AD (110 Hijri) in Baṣra. His funeral reportedly attracted tens of thousands of mourners. His legacy (left behind in teachings etc) (he was & taught); Pioneer of Islamic spirituality and Sufism. Early theologian who shaped debates on free will and divine justice. A model of fearless integrity, refusing to compromise with corrupt rulers. His sayings continue to inspire Muslims across traditions. He was remembered as Imam of Basra.

9. Critical Perspective:

Some later historians saw him as too pessimistic (overemphasizing fear of Allah). Others argue he brought balance, combining fear with hope. While not a scientist, his contribution to ethical thought and psychology of the soul influenced Islamic civilization deeply.

10. Conclusion:

Hasan al-Baṣrī (642–728 AD) was one of the great moral voices of early Islam. He lived close to the Prophet's Companions, mastered Quranic teachings and became the most famous preacher of his time. His legacy lies in spiritual purification, theological reflection, and fearless moral guidance. As a founder of early Sufism, he bridged law, theology, and spirituality, leaving behind teachings that continue to inspire seekers of truth across the centuries.

Comparison: Qadariyya vs. Jabriyya vs. Sunni Orthodoxy:

Aspect	Qadariyya (Free Will Group)	Jabriyya (Predestination Group)	Sunni Orthodoxy (Middle Path)
View of Human Will	Humans have full free will; they create their own actions.	Humans have no free will; all actions are predetermined by Allah.	Humans have choice (ikhtiyār), but the power to act is created by Allah.
Divine Justice	True justice requires free will; Allah does not force sins.	Justice = whatever Allah decrees, even if humans are forced.	Allah creates actions, but humans 'acquire' (kasb) them and are accountable.
Responsibility	Humans are fully responsible for their deeds.	Humans have no real responsibility since they are compelled.	Humans are responsible because they choose, though power comes from Allah.
Political Implications	Criticized rulers → injustice is their choice, not 'Allah's decree.'	Supported rulers → 'their rule is Allah's decree, so obey them.'	Middle stance → rulers are accountable, but divine will still governs.
Famous Figures	Maʿbad al-Juhānī, Ghaylān al-Dimashqī	Jahm ibn Ṣafwān (linked to Jahmiyya)	Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal
Later Influence	Adopted by Muʿtazilah (rationalist theology).	Influenced extreme fatalistic sects (Jahmiyya).	Became the Sunni mainstream view (Ashʿarī & Māturīdī schools).
Status in Sunni Tradition	Considered a deviant sect.	Considered a deviant sect.	Accepted as orthodox position.

Rabia Basri.

Rābia al-ʿAdawiyya al-Baṣriyya (717–801 AD) was well known as Rābia al-Baṣrī, one of the earliest and most influential women mystics (Islamic spiritual knowledge) in Islamic history. She is remembered not for science in the technical sense, but for her revolutionary teachings on divine love (maḥabba), her ascetic life (simple

Islamic life style), and her impact on Sufi spirituality. She was among the first to teach that Allah should be loved purely for His own sake, not out of fear of Hell or desire for Paradise. She was a Sunni but not clear which sunni because at her time the 4 types of sunni-hanafi, maliki, shafi, hanbali were not fully developed.

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Early Life and Background:

Full name: Rābia bint Ismā'īl al-'Adawiyya al-Qaysiyya. Born around 717 AD (95 hijri) in Baṣra (Iraq) during Ummaya caliphate. She was from a poor family & was the fourth daughter (rābia means "the fourth"). Got orphan at a young age; reportedly sold into slavery due to poverty. Her master got impressed by her piety and devotion, eventually freed her. She taught in her adult life time & this was early Abbasi Caliphate period.

Turn to Asceticism (detachment from worldly pleasure) (Zuhd):

Asceticism means to detach from worldly pleasure, live a simple life & remembrance of Akhirat (hereafter).

After being freed, Rābia chose a life of renunciation (detachment from excessive love of Dunya-worldly life). She lived in poverty, (Salah) prayers, fasting, and night prayers (Salah). She refused marriage proposals, saying she was too occupied in Allah's thought, soon got known in Baṣra for her saintly life, wisdom, and purity of heart.

Spiritual Philosophy and Teachings:

a) Divine Love (maḥabba): her central teaching was that love of Allah must be selfless and unconditional. Her famous dua was: "O Lord, if I worship You from fear of Hell, burn me in Hell. If I worship You from hope of Paradise, exclude me from Paradise. But if I worship You for Your own sake, show me Your Eternal (everlasting) Beauty."

b) Balance of Fear, Hope, and Love: Earlier ascetics (simple living sufis) stressed fear (khawf) of Allah and hope (rajā). Rābia emphasized love as the highest path. Shifted Sufism from fear-based piety to devotional intimacy with Allah.

c) Detachment from the World: Practiced strict poverty, owning almost nothing. Believed worldly detachments & obey Allah's path (means too much or excessive love greed for the Duniya, makes hard to focus on Allah).

d) Inner Sincerity (ikhlāṣ): she taught that worship must be pure, free of ulterior motives.

e) Saw the heart as the true locus of divine encounter (it is a phrase) means the heart is where faith, love for Allah, sincerity, spiritual enlightenment is achieved.

Role in Sufism and Islamic Thought:

She was the first female Islamic Sufi saint whose influence shaped the entire Sufi tradition. She elevated the concept of divine love into a cornerstone of Sufi theology. She was inspired by Ḥasan al-Baṣrī & inspired Dhū'l-Nūn al-Miṣrī, Junaid Baghdadi, and Rūmī by her teachings & became a model for female piety and spiritual authority in Islam.

Books and Sayings:

Rābia herself did not write any books, but her sayings, poetic dua and poems were preserved by disciples and later Sufi biographers like Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'). Collections of her words emphasize her wisdom, humility, and love for Allah.

Contributions to Science and the World (Indirect):

Rābia did not contribute to natural sciences directly, her contributions to human thought were profound: 1) Revolutionized religious psychology by making love for Allah the highest motive. 2) Contributed to the philosophy of mysticism (tasawwuf-feeling near to Allah) within Islam. 3) Inspired a vast tradition of Sufi poetry, philosophy and art. 4) Gave women a respected place in the history of Islamic spirituality.

Teachings in Practice:

1) Lived in seclusion (uzla) (avoiding people/ isolation), rejecting fame and wealth. 2) Known for her night-long (Salah) prayers and constant remembrance of Allah. 3) When asked why she never married, she replied that she belonged to Allah. 4) Her life embodied purity, sincerity and total devotion.

Talent and Personality: 1) Remarkable for her eloquence (speech in short with deep meaning) and wisdom (deep understanding & judgment) despite poverty and hardship. 2) Charismatic (having a spiritual charm & power which attracted people) and spiritually magnetic (people felt pulled toward her), drawing both men and women to her circle. 3) Her greatest talent: expressing deep love of Allah in words that touched hearts for centuries. 4) Courageous: spoke truth even to famous male scholars of her time.

Death and Legacy: She died around 801 AD (185 hijri) in Baṣra (during Abbasi caliphate) & was buried there; her grave became a place of reverence.

Legacy:

1) First great female saint of Islam. 2) Elevated the concept of love of Almighty in Islamic thought. 2) Inspired Sufi poets like Rūmī, Aṭṭār, and Ibn Arabī. 3) Remembered worldwide as a symbol of pure devotion.

Critical Perspective:

Some modern historians question the historical accuracy of all attributed sayings, since most were preserved centuries later. Regardless, the spiritual archetype of Rābia is consistent: a woman of pure devotion and love. She represents a turning point: the feminine voice in Sufism, emphasizing love and closeness with Allah.

Conclusion:

Rābia al-Baṣrī (717–801 AD) was a pioneer of Sufi spirituality, remembered as the saint who made love of Allah the central principle of Ibaadat. Born in poverty, living as an ascetic and leaving no written books but remembered for her poetries, dua, truth deep meaning speech, new thoughts in Sufism; she nevertheless shaped Islamic mysticism forever. Her legacy is not in science or politics, but in the science of the heart; teaching that Allah should be loved for His own sake. Today, she is revered (respected) across the Muslim world (by all shia, sunni, shafi etc) and beyond as a woman of wisdom, love, and holiness. It is not clear whether she was sunni or shia or else, but she is famous for being Islamic Sufi.

Her followers:

1) Dhū'l-Nūn al-Miṣrī (ذو النون المصري, 859 AD):

He followed & got inspired by her teachings after many years of her death; he was during the early Abbasi caliphate; He developed the doctrine of ma'rifa (knowledge of Allah through direct experience). He used symbolic language (special words) and allegories (explain with stories or examples) in mysticism (Sufism). He was a pure Islamic sufi.

2) Al-Junayd al-Baghdādī (الجنيد البغدادي, 910 AD):

He followed & got inspired by her teachings after many years of her death; he was during golden time of Abbasi caliphate; He systematized sober mysticism (means not getting extreme in sufism, maintain peaceful balance Sufism & Islam). He taught that union with Allah (fanā') should not abolish the law (Sharī'a) means when any sufi feels union with Allah, he is not allowed to break the laws of Islam). He emphasized sober intoxication (balance between ecstasy and discipline) means the sufi should not get overconfident when he gets the inner joy of Allah's love, he should balance everything, obey & practice all Islamic laws. He was a pure Islamic sufi.

3) Al-Ghazālī (الغزالي, 1111 AD):

He followed & got inspired by her teaching after many years of her death; he was during the end period of Abbasi caliphate.

He integrated Sufism with orthodox Sunni Islam. His works, especially Iḥyā' Ulūm al-Dīn, gave philosophical depth to mystical concepts. He defended Sufism against rationalist critics. He was in the end period of Abbasi caliphate period. He was a pure Islamic sufi. A whole chapter no. 16 is written on him in my book please read it.

4) Ibn Arabī (ابن عربي, 1240 AD):

He followed & got inspired by her teaching after many years of her death; he was during the last period of Abbasi caliphate. He developed waḥdat al-wujūd (unity of being). Saw all existence as manifestations of Allah's reality. His profound influence (very deep and lasting effect) on Islamic philosophy and mysticism worldwide.

The above lines mean that everything in the world is a sign or reflection of Allah's reality. Example: a flower shows Allah's beauty; the sky shows Allah's greatness; kindness shows Allah's mercy. So, the world is like a mirror-it reflects Allah's names and attributes, but Allah is greater than all of his creation. He changed how people in many countries thought about religion and spirituality. His ideas had a very big effect on Islamic philosophy and Sufism all over the world. His teachings shaped the

way many Muslim thinkers, poets, and saints understood Allah and the universe. Even outside Islam, philosophers and mystics studied his writings

5) Rūmī (مولانا جلال الدين الرومي, 1273 AD):

He followed & got inspired by her teaching after many years of her death; he was born after the Abbasi caliphate ended, as the Mongols invaded Baghdad in 1258 AD. He lived under the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum (turkey). Through his poetry (Mathnawī) expressed mystical philosophy in accessible, emotional, and symbolic ways. He stressed on love, union and annihilation in Allah. He taught that the best spiritual path is to love Allah deeply, to feel united with Him in the heart, and to forget yourself completely so that only Allah remains in your mind and soul.

Love: treating Allah as the true Beloved.

Union: feeling so close to Allah that nothing stands between you and Him.

Annihilation in Allah (fanā’): losing your ego and selfishness until only Allah’s presence fills you. In short: The self disappears and only Allah’s love remains.